

for something, even for much. There is no doubt that as the years increase, the man who cares at all for intellectual pleasures is able to care for them more, is able to substitute them, without keen regret, without wailing and gnashing of teeth, for certain other pleasures, to which, perhaps, formerly he clung. That is why the man who is mentally and bodily—you know what I mean ? ”

“ Yes.”

“ Has such an immense advantage in years of decline over the man who is merely a bodily man.”

“ I am sure that is true. But——”

“ What is it ? ”

“ The heart ? What about that ? ”

“ Perhaps there are some hearts that can fulfil themselves sufficiently in friendship.”

As Artois said this his eyes rested upon Hermione with an expression in them that revealed much that he never spoke in words. She put out her hand, and took his, and pressed it, holding hers over it upon the oar.

“ Emile,” she said, “ sometimes you make me feel unworthy and ungrateful because—because I still need, I dare to need more than I have been given. Without you I don’t know how I should have faced it.”

“ Without me you would never have had to face it.”

That was the cry that rose up perpetually in the heart of Artois, the cry that Hermione must never hear. He said to her now :

“ Without you, Hermione, I should be dust in the dust of Africa ! ”

“ Perhaps we each owe something to the other,” she said. “ It is blessed to have a debt to a friend.”

“ Would to God that I could pay all my debt to you ! ” Artois exclaimed.

Again the cavern took up his voice and threw it back to the sea in confused and hollow mutterings. They both looked up, as if some one were above them, warning them or rebuking them. At that instant they had the feeling that they were being watched. But there was only the empty grey sea about them, and over their heads the rugged, weary rock that had leaned over the sea for countless years.

“ Hark ! ” said Artois, “ it is telling me that my debt to you can never be paid : only in one way could it be partially discharged. If I could show you a path to happiness, the happiness you long for, and need, the passionate happiness of the heart that is giving where it rejoices to give—for your happiness must always lie in generosity—I should have partially paid my debt to you. But that is impossible.”